

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A mask assembly for a patient comprising:
a frame;
a cushion provided to the frame; and
a vent assembly including a first vent, a second vent, and a selector to switch the flow of exhaled gas from the patient between the first and second vents.
2. The mask assembly of claim 1, wherein the first and second vents include at least one characteristic relating to noise and/or flow which are different from one another.
3. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-2, wherein the frame comprises a shell and the vent assembly is provided on the shell.
4. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-3, wherein the cushion includes nozzle elements and the selector includes a clip that is slidable with respect to the frame to select between the first and second vents.
5. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-4, wherein the selector is rotatable.
6. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-5, wherein the selector is pivotable.
7. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-6, wherein the selector is slidable.

8. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1, 2 or 4-7, wherein the frame includes an elbow and the selector is provided on the elbow.

9. The mask assembly of claim 8, wherein the selector is provided on a depending arm of the elbow.

10. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-9, wherein one of the first and second vents is provided with a material configured to reduce at least one of noise level and risk of cross-infection.

11. The mask assembly of claim 10, wherein the material is selected from the group consisting of foam, GORE-TEXTM and ceramic.

12. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 1-11, wherein the selector is adjustable between first and second positions corresponding to the first and second vents, respectively, and the selector includes positioning structure to define the first and second positions.

13. The mask assembly of claim 12, wherein the positioning structure comprises detents.

14. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 12-13, wherein the vent assembly is configured to vent exhaled gas even if the vent assembly is not in the first or second positions.

15. The mask assembly according to any one of claims 12-14, wherein an alarm is sounded if the vent assembly is not in the first or second positions.

16. The mask assembly of claim 15, wherein the alarm is defined by a higher noise level produced by the vent assembly.

17. A vent assembly including a first vent, a second vent, and a selector to switch the flow of exhaled gas from a patient between the first and second vents.

18. The vent assembly of claim 17, wherein the first and second vents include at least one characteristic relating to noise and/or flow which are different from one another.

19. The vent assembly according to any one of claims 1-2, wherein the selector is rotatable, pivotable and/or slidable.

20. The vent assembly according to any one of claims 17-19, wherein one of the first and second vents is provided with a material configured to reduce at least one of noise level and risk of cross-infection.

21. The vent assembly of claim 20, wherein the material is selected from the group consisting of foam, GORE-TEX™ and ceramic.

22. The vent assembly according to any one of claims 17-21, wherein the selector is adjustable between first and second positions corresponding to the first and second vents, respectively, and the selector includes positioning structure to define the first and second positions.

23. The vent assembly of claim 22, wherein the positioning structure comprises detents.

24. The vent assembly according to any one of claims 22-23, wherein the vent assembly is configured to vent exhaled gas even if the vent assembly is not in the first or second positions.

25. The vent assembly according to any one of claims 22-24, wherein an alarm is sounded if the vent assembly is not in the first or second positions.

26. The mask assembly of claim 25, wherein the alarm is defined by a higher noise level produced by the vent assembly.